

VISIONARY

CORNEA RESEARCH FOUNDATION OF AMERICA

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A Cornea Transplant Story



Tim Fischer, Jack Herrmann, Luis Almeida, Lupe Alvarez, and Marianne Price, Ph.D.

While on a break from a construction site one sunny afternoon in Quito, Ecuador, a young stone mason shared his story of vision impairment with two brothers, and as a result his life has been changed forever.

Through a collaboration of good will, the Cornea Research Foundation of America, in partnership with the Indiana Lions Eye and Tissue Transplant Bank, Quito Barrio Outreach, an organization that supports poor communities in Quito, Ecuador and several generous church groups in Illinois, Luis Almeida has regained the gift of sight.

On a church mission trip in Ecuador, brothers Jim and Jack Herrmann, along with other members of the mission, befriended a stone mason named Luis Almeida. Although Jim and Jack did not speak Spanish, they immediately befriended the Spanish-speaking man, his wife Veronica and his two children, Kevin and Camilla.

While on a break one afternoon, Luis pointed to his eyes. As Lupe Alvarez, another member of the mission team translated, they learned that Luis was almost blind in one eye and could not see well out of the other. The brothers were concerned for Luis and the future of his young family. They soon learned that the Lions Club had found a problem with his cornea, the clear window on the front of the eye. Luis worried that his wife and son would soon become responsible for supporting the family after he, only 31 years old, could no longer work when he became blind.

On the plane home, Jim and Jack could not stop thinking about the Almeida family. What would happen to them if they did not help? Unlike the United States, Ecuador does not have

the supply of donated corneas. The more the brothers thought about it, the more they were inspired to help Luis. As they had witnessed, he was a good family man; a hard worker whose quality of life was bound to be dramatically altered once he lost his sight completely. "It was heart-breaking to think this man would soon be blind and unable to support his children," Jim Herrmann commented, "and at the same time knowing that just a few hours away in the United States, we were blessed with the doctors and organizations we knew could help him... we just could not walk away," he added.

Once home, they searched online and found www.cornea.org. They called Marianne Price, Ph.D., the executive director and the collaboration to help Luis began. The Indiana Lions Eye and Tissue Transplant Bank agreed to provide the cornea, Dr. Francis W. Price, Jr. of Price Vision Group and founder of CRFA, and the Central Indiana Surgery Center waived their fees. Jim and Jack raised donations to cover the cost of travel and lodging in Indianapolis. Jack Herrmann noted "Once CRFA and Price Vision came aboard, everything else fell into place. We are so grateful to everyone at the Lions, CRFA, and Price Vision for their compassion, professionalism and willingness to help – it has been incredible." He added, "Luis will be going home to a grateful family, with renewed hope for his children's future. The entire Almeida family believes that a true miracle is happening to them. They cannot believe that so many people so far away that do not even know them would spend the time and money to help Luis see clearly."

Thanks to generous donors and Father Don and Father Paddy from Quito Barrio Outreach who helped Luis through the visa process, Luis made it to Indianapolis to receive his cornea transplant. "We were happy to coordinate this effort to help Luis regain his sight. It is especially heartwarming to see all of the individuals and organizations who stepped up to help Luis," says Marianne Price.

Luis reflected upon his experience with the medical staff, commenting, "My wife Veronica and I cannot express our thankfulness enough. My children also understand that I would have surely lost my sight in Ecuador. This will allow me to continue to work to support our family. The medical staff has been extremely attentive and friendly, unlike anything I have experienced in Ecuador. May God bless all of them, all of those that have helped and their families for this wonderful gift!"

For more information:

www.cornea.org • www.quitobarriooutreach.org
www.indianalionseyebank.org

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Top Honors

Francis W. Price Jr., M.D. and wife Marianne Price, Ph.D. were presented with the "Santa Caterina Oro Città di Siena" International Prize on February 27, 2011 in Siena, Italy

Drs. Price were honored at the ceremony receiving the Santa Caterina gilded sculpture at the Teatro dei Rozzi in Siena. Together they were chosen as recipients of the Santa Caterina prize as their research has led to significant improvements in cornea transplant surgery and treatment of eye diseases around the world.

Each year, ten recipients from different areas of expertise all over the world are selected to receive this prestigious award. "We feel blessed to have found better ways to give people back the use of their eyes and to have had the opportunity to share improved techniques with eye care professionals nationally and internationally," the Price's commented.

Creative Giving – Every Penny Counts

What if Cornea Research Foundation of America earned a donation every time you searched the Internet? Or how about if a percentage of every purchase you made online went to support our cause? Well, now it can!

GoodSearch.com is a Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Use it just as you would any search engine, get quality search results from Yahoo, and watch the donation add up!

GoodShop.com is a new online shopping mall which donates up to 30 percent of each purchase to your favorite cause! Hundreds of great stores including Amazon, Target, Gap Best Buy, eBay, Macy's and Barnes & Noble have teamed up with GoodShop and every time you place an order, you'll be supporting your favorite cause.

And if you download the toolbar, our cause will earn money every time you shop and search online - even if you forget to go to GoodShop or GoodSearch first! Add the toolbar at <http://www.goodsearch.com/toolbar/cornea-research-foundation-of-america>.

GoodSearch

How We Are Making an Impact With Your Support

by Marianne O. Price, Ph.D.



Contradicting the notion that you can't have your cake and eat it too, we have recently found that small incision cornea transplants (known variously as endothelial keratoplasty, EK, DS(A)EK, or DM(A)EK) restore vision much faster than traditional transplants and are likely to last as long or longer. This exciting news has helped allay the lingering concern that small incision transplants might not survive as well, because more manipulation of the delicate donor cornea is required for it to fit through a small incision.

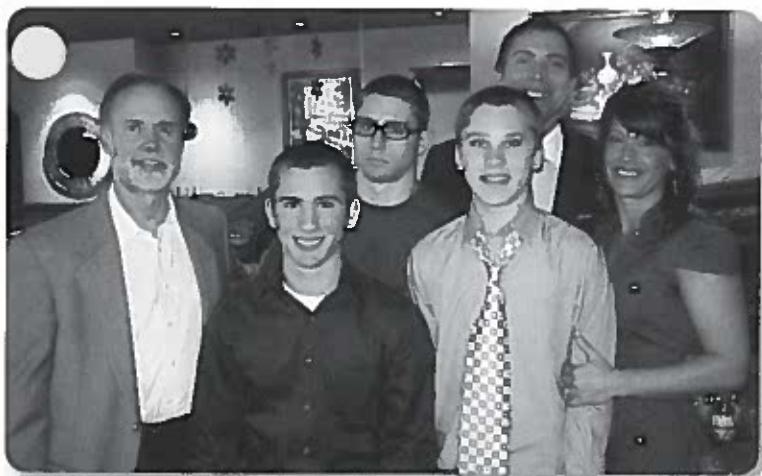
Also exciting is that small incision transplants now allow us to more closely monitor glaucoma, a condition in which the nerve carrying information from the eye to the brain becomes damaged by increased pressure inside the eye. We can monitor intra-ocular pressure and peripheral vision much more accurately after a small incision (EK) transplant, because the

visual recovery is rapid and the front surface of the eye remains unchanged. Glaucoma monitoring is much more difficult with a traditional full thickness transplant because vision can remain poor for a year or two and the front surface of the cornea is distorted. With the more accurate monitoring we achieve with EK-grafted eyes, we have better results with managing glaucoma as well as better graft survival rates.

However, we have found that previous glaucoma filtration surgery remains a serious risk to long-term graft survival with both small and large incision transplants. We are continuing to dig deeper to understand why this is the case and to find ways to improve graft longevity in eyes with glaucoma filtration surgery.

The Cornea Research Foundation maintains the largest database of small incision transplants in the world, uniquely enabling us to answer these important questions. We are grateful to the many cornea transplant recipients who have provided financial support to help continue this work.

Update: Stephen Daprile's "Give the Gift of Sight" Fundraiser raises more than \$9,750!



Dr. Price with the Daprile's at their CRFA benefit.

When Stephen was just 8 years old he suffered an eye injury that left him virtually blind in his right eye. In the six years that followed, Stephen and his family endured five surgeries in an attempt to save his vision. Finally, Stephen found Dr. Price who performed a cornea transplant known as DSEK which his body has accepted.

Grateful, Stephen and his family hosted a Give the Gift of Sight Event - a fundraiser for the Cornea Research Foundation which conducts research to develop new and improve existing procedures like the DSEK procedure Stephen received. On November 21, 2010, at the Caffè Capri, a local restaurant in Boardman, Ohio, the Daprile's raised approximately \$9,750 from brunch and mimosas, a Chinese Auction, lottery ticket drawings and through local shops donating a portion of their proceeds for the day.

Thank you, Daprile family. It's people like you that give us the fuel to continue on the road of innovation discovering better ways to combat blindness and help prevent loss of vision. Find a link to Stephen's video on our website (www.cornea.org) or on [Facebook.com/cornea.org](https://www.facebook.com/cornea.org).

If you are interested in hosting a Give the Gift of Sight fundraiser in honor of someone you love, please contact Jessica@cornea.org.

Happenings



Jessica Dingley

Welcome New Staff – We are happy to introduce Jessica Dingley as the new development director. "I'm filled with excitement to be working at the Foundation—I look forward to helping bridge the gap between the many wonderful scientific studies that are taking place and the Foundation supporters who would like to know more about them," she said.

Stay in the know! The Foundation now has a monthly e-newsletter! To subscribe, email Jessica@cornea.org to start receiving this quick, informative update.

Get involved! Looking for ways to give back? CRFA is in need of volunteers to help plan the Golf Outing and Women's Luncheon. Call 317-814-2993 for more details.

Save the Date! The 2011 Annual Cornea Golf Classic will be held on June 2nd at Wood Wind Golf Club. To register, call 317-814-2993.



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Ask Your Doctor

By Dr. Francis Price Jr.



Q. I currently wear contacts but I'm thinking about having LASIK. Which one typically provides clearer vision—LASIK or contacts?

A. Well that is a good question. It depends. Overall, LASIK may provide clearer vision because contacts can move around when you blink, which can cause vision fluctuations depending on your prescription.

This is actually one of the things we may help determine with our LASIK/Contact Lens Satisfaction Study. We are currently recruiting contact lens wearers and those having LASIK to be in the study. Visit www.cornea.org to see a list of sites through the U.S. that are participating in this study sponsored by the Cornea Research Foundation of America.